SPECIAL EVENTS

The Faculty of Music,
University of Toronto

Concert Hall,
Edward Johnson Building

STANLEY QUARTET

Gilbert Ross, violin — *Robert Courte, viola*
Gustave Rosseels, violin — *Jerome Jelinek, cello*

Thursday, January 14, 1965
8:30 p.m.

Programme

QUARTET IN D MAJOR, K. 499 ('HOFFMEISTER') *Mozart*

Allegretto

Menuetto (allegretto)

Adagio

Allegro

This work is often called the "Hoffmeister" quartet, after Franz Anton Hoffmeister, a composer two years Mozart's senior, and one of Mozart's few really close musical friends, who was also the owner of a publishing-house in Vienna. He often used to lend sums of money, which Mozart would repay by writing music. This quartet is essentially just such a potboiler – although there are no signs of haste or lack of care in the writing of it: on the contrary, it achieves just as high a degree of perfection in detail and expression as any of the earlier "Opus X" quartets. One feature which shows a new strength and independence in Mozart's chamber music style is the way the outer movements exploit to the full their opening themes, using them, developing them, and constantly revealing new meaning in them.

The first movement has an unusual lay-out to its themes. The first begins in octaves and has a counter-statement in which the instruments alternate in pairs. The main motive later grows into a canon between first violin and cello. In the second theme, Mozart skillfully dodges the finality of the dominant cadence by inserting "surprise" phrases, the first in F sharp minor, and the other, more extended, in F major. The whole exposition is exceptionally broad, and rich in harmony, and the main motif is rarely lost sight of.

The minuet is shorter and more dance-like than usual with Mozart. Some inner chromaticisms and fine harmonic variants in the theme suggest hidden depths. The trio reveals brilliant sonorous possibilities in the quartet medium. Einstein calls it "a piece of musical wizardry." It leads directly into the repeated minuet, a detail rare in Mozart.

The adagio is constructed in long, highly ornamental melodic phrases. The opening theme, characteristically punctuated with tiny expressive pauses, is heard again immediately, played by the two lower instruments in thirds, with a lovely new countertheme above; later it is treated in double canon. The second theme is dominated by a little figure of four 16th-notes, with Mozart's bowing marks indicating a stress on the first, a legato between the first and second, and light separation of the other two: such details of craft enhance pure inspiration, and are in a sense themselves inspired.

The finale has a wispy, hesitant, main theme, whose rests are later filled out by the superposition of a broad countertheme. There is considerable harmonic daring; and the development is highly contrapuntal. However the character of the main theme forbids any abandon or general exuberance of spirit. Mozart is perhaps more himself in this finale than in those where he follows Haydn's example. – J. B.

*Quartet No. 8 (1950) — *Quincy Porter*

Lento

Allegro

Adagio, molto espressivo

(played without pause)

Born in Connecticut in 1897, Quincy Porter attended the Yale School of Music where he was a student of Horatio Parker. He later studied composition with D'Indy in Paris, and with Ernest Bloch in the United States. He has been widely active as a performer of chamber music, and has held several distinguished academic posts. In 1946 he was appointed Professor of Music at Yale University. His orchestral works have been performed by the New York Philharmonic, the Rochester Philharmonic, and other orchestras; his chamber music has been presented extensively both in America and Europe.

The composer describes his String Quartet No. 8 as follows:

"This string quartet is in some respects freer in form than are my other quartets. It might be said to be an introspective work in which a variety of emotional experiences are put side by side, setting themselves off against one another by contrasts – sometimes abrupt, sometimes more gradual. There is no program – it is absolute music – and it is not to be expected that the members of the audience will necessarily experience similar emotions to those of the composer.

"The **Lento** has an harmonic formula at the very beginning which is almost a theme in itself, without a clear-cut melodic element, and this returns in a variety of ways. There are melodic cells unifying the melodic ideas which appear later in the movement, but the movement is not unified by a literal return of any melody. It gives, rather, the feeling of leading toward something which is ahead, never retracing its steps as it moves slowly along. Toward the end of the movement the main motive of the **Allegro** (a minor third and a major third a fifth higher) begins to creep in, but this is the only use of similar motives in the two movements. The **Lento** leads into the **Allegro** without pause. The **Allegro** is marked by sharp contrasts in mood, ranging from violent to humorous to pathetic, and ending with concentration on the main motive. The last movement is more tranquil than the slow introduction, but leads back to the mood of the former toward the end."

– INTERMISSION –

---

*Commissioned by The University of Michigan and dedicated to the Stanley Quartet.

1965 01

QUARTET IN C MAJOR, OP. 59, NO. 3 — *Beethoven*

Introduzione (andante con moto), allegro

Andante con moto quasi allegretto

Menuetto (grazioso)

Allegro molto

C major was for Beethoven, especially in his middle years, the key of ringing affirmation. The present quartet is the most dynamic and affirmative of the Opus 59 ("Rasumovsky") trilogy.

One hopes that the contemporary pedants who criticized Beethoven for daring to begin his First Symphony with a seventh chord resolving into the chord of the subdominant were safely laid to rest before the production of this C Major quartet: it begins with a diminished chord, which has no resolution at all. The basis of this mysterious, groping introduction proves to be a continuously-descending scale in the cello part, which eventually reaches a pause on the leading note, B. The expected firm downbeat resolution onto C still does not arrive, though, until we are well into the main body of the movement. Indeed the whole piece is imbued with the incisive upbeat rhythm which initiates the allegro. In view of what follows in the rest of the quartet, the imitative presentation of both the second theme and the staccato closing-theme here is significant. The reprise of the opening theme of the allegro shows the original first-violin flights completely transformed in character and in setting: what was merely incisive at the beginning now appears as a dynamic outgrowth of the long central development.

The slow movement is a lament of strange quality. There is a sort of other-worldliness in the rigorous pulsation of its low-cello pizzicatos and in the momentary vision of light provided by an ethereal fragment of "second theme." The mournful cadence-theme has an inescapable chant-like expression that is almost primeval in its appeal.

The third movement is retrospective — a real minuet, dance-like in accentuation, but courtly rather than brusque, with rhythms that are ornamental rather than insistent. A coda develops some of the motifs along mysterious harmonic paths, coming to a pause on the dominant.

The famous finale, which follows immediately, is one of the most overwhelmingly brilliant movements Beethoven ever wrote. Perhaps one stretches a point in calling it a fugue. True, its opening subject is expressed by the four instruments entering one by one — but if this is a fugal exposition, it is certainly a very crude one, by the standards Beethoven himself supplies from around this time (for instance in the fugato passages of the Third Symphony). Rather the movement has its prototype in various finales by Haydn and Mozart where fugal and homophonic passages (the old style and the new) are deliberately juxtaposed. But Beethoven seems to have been the first to realize, however naïvely, that when four instruments enter one by one the volume of sound becomes greater. One suspects therefore that the "fugal exposition" here is simply a new way of achieving the Beethovenian dynamic crescendo. The subject itself, with its double-anacrusis motif, implies the strongest possible forward momentum.

The over-all plan is that of a sonata allegro. The second subject grows from a brief four-way conversation in short snippets of subdued excitement. The development gives us the subject in inversion and in close canon and then in a series of long, highly dramatic, crescendo phrases taken by each instrument in turn. In the reprise a chromatic countertheme is combined with the subject. The coda, with its emphatic optimism, great length, and boundless energy, strains the quartet medium to its very limits. — J. B.